

MINUTES
WOODSTOCK CITY COUNCIL
City Council Chambers
August 4, 2020

A regular meeting of the Woodstock City Council was called to order at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, August 4, 2020, by Mayor Sager in the Council Chambers at Woodstock City Hall. Mayor Sager noted this meeting of the Woodstock City Council is being held in accordance with the State's requirements for remote meetings as defined by the Open Meetings Act, with Council members attending remotely and those attending at City Hall observing social distancing. He stated it is being livestreamed as is the City's policy. Inviting all to participate, Mayor Sager explained the procedures to be used by the City Council, City Staff, and the Public to join today's meeting, including how comments may be made and questions asked. Mayor Sager explained the Consent Calendar.

A roll call was taken.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS: Mayor Brian Sager.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT ATTENDING REMOTELY: Darrin Flynn, Lisa Lohmeyer, Wendy Piersall, Jim Prindiville, Gordon Tebo, and Michael Turner.

COUNCIL ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS: City Manager Roscoe Stelford

STAFF ATTENDING REMOTELY: Assistant City Manager/Finance Director Paul Christensen, City Attorney Ruth Schlossberg, IT Director Dan McElmeel, Building and Zoning Director Joe Napolitano, Public Works Director Jeff Van Landuyt, Deputy Chief Jeff Parsons, City Planner Darrell Moore, and City Engineer Chris Tiedt.

OTHERS PRESENT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS: City Clerk Cindy Smiley

Mayor Sager noted the presence of a quorum under the revised rules for remote meetings as defined within the Open Meetings Act and applicable during this COVID-19 emergency. City Clerk Smiley confirmed the agenda before the Council is a true and correct copy of the published agenda.

III. FLOOR DISCUSSION

A. Public Comments

Greg Amato, Redwing Drive, Woodstock, commended Mayor Sager for holding the three sessions on racism, opining it was a bold and courageous thing to do. He talked about the plight of the indigenous people of the United States, noting the genocide that has occurred in that population. He also talked about the contributions that were made and are continuing to be made by that population.

Mayor Sager thanked staff for facilitating these sessions and also the Council members who were able to participate. Noting it was a very positive experience for him personally and for the community, he thanked the special guests and the members of the public who attended.

C. Council Comments

Mayor Sager noted the memo regarding emergency repairs need for Banford Road and the resultant unanticipated cost of \$47,784. He stated, as these are emergency repairs, it is recommended that City Manager Roscoe Stelford approve the expenditure on behalf of the municipality and then the matter be brought back to the City Council for formal approval.

Mr. Stelford stated the road has been closed as it has been determined to be not safe for travel and the City Engineer has reviewed the contractor's quote. He stated the contractor will make repairs tomorrow and the road will be opened as soon as possible.

Mayor Sager again noted the recommendation is that Mr. Stelford be authorized to approve the expenditure, as allowed by the City Code, and then that action will be ratified by the City Council at the next meeting.

In response to Mayor Sager's question as to whether Council is willing to allow this action to proceed, knowing it will require approval of the Council at a future meeting, it was the consensus of the Council to proceed without objection.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by L. Lohmeyer, second by M. Turner, to approve the Consent Agenda.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager, there were no items removed from the Consent Agenda by the City Council.

Noting the remote presence of the petitioners for Item D-7 – Ordinance – Special Use Permit – Cannabis Craft Growers, Mayor Sager thanked them for their interest and investment in Woodstock.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager, there were no comments or questions from the City Council or the Public for the petitioners.

Noting the statement in the Staff Report for this item, which talked about changing the UDO to allow more than two craft growers, Councilwoman Piersall stated she thought the State would only issue one facility for this area and asked about this change.

Mayor Sager stated that is regarding this cycle of review, but noted the state could continue to receive additional waves of applications with additional approvals. Councilwoman Piersall stated that knowledge would have changed her vote at the last meeting.

Councilwoman Piersall complimented this petitioner for its plan, opining it will be an asset to the community.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager regarding her previous comment, Councilwoman Piersall stated she thought the state would evaluate all of the applications based on certain criteria and approve only one of them, so she deferred to their judgement, noting she was more impressed with one of the submissions over the other at the last meeting.

Mayor Sager stated it is not the City's position to determine whether or not an application meets the state's requirements, noting they will approve applicants based on the defined point system, and will also take into consideration the number approved in various geographic areas, and then if it is within the location the City feels is appropriate, the facility will proceed. Councilwoman Piersall noted her issue was with the location for one of the past applicants.

Councilman Tebo wished to recognize the donation made by Mr. Wilson of MBI Staffing to the Police Department for an ATV, opining the Department will make great use of it. Mayor Sager also extended the City's sincere gratitude for this generous donation.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager, there were no further comments or questions on any item remaining on the Consent Agenda from the City Council or the Public.

Mayor Sager affirmed the Consent Agenda to include items A through D-7 as follows:

A. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

July 21, 2020 City Council Meeting

B. WARRANTS #3915 #3916

C. MINUTES AND REPORTS

Department of Public Works Monthly Report June 2020

D. MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 161:

- 1. Ordinance – Municipal Code Changes – Adjudication -** Approval of Ordinance 20-O-57, identified as Document 1, *An Ordinance Amending Title 1, Chapter 7, Article L, Providing a System of Administrative Adjudication of the City Code of Woodstock, Illinois*
- 2. Purchase Authorization – Police Utility Vehicle – Donated Funds -** Approval to expend \$13,099 for the purchase of one 2020 Polaris Ranger Crew 570-4 EPS from Woodstock Powersports using donated funds.
- 3. Ordinance – Parking Variance – Aldi Store at Lake Ave. And American Way -** Approval of Ordinance 20-O-58, identified as Document 2, *An Ordinance Granting a Variation from Section 9.12.C Required Setbacks (for Parking Areas) at the Northwest Corner of Lake Avenue and American Way.*

- 4. Ordinance – Sign Variance – Aldi Store at Lake Ave. and American Way -**
Approval of Ordinance 20-O-59, identified as Document 3, *An Ordinance Granting a Variation from Section 13.8.1 (Permanent Wall Signs) to Allow a Permanent Illuminated Wall Sign Up to 75 Square Feet in Area at the Northwest Corner of Lake Avenue and American Way.*
- 5. Resolution – Multi-Jurisdictional SWAT IGA Renewal –** Approval of Resolution 20-R-08, identified as Document 4, *Approval of an Intergovernmental Mutual Aid Agreement with the McHenry County Sheriff's S.W.A.T. Team.*
- 6. Ordinance – Traffic Control Modifications –** Approval of Ordinance 20-O-60, identified as Document 5, *An Ordinance Providing for an Amendment to the Woodstock City Code Providing for Revisions to Various Traffic Schedules*, creating a four-way stop at the intersection of Preswick Lane and Fairview Lane, and the designation of Retail Drive as a through street at its intersection with Preswick Lane.
- 7. Ordinance – Special Use Permit – Cannabis Craft Grower –** Approval of Ordinance 20-O-61, identified as Document 6, *An Ordinance Approving a Special Use Permit to Allow a Cannabis Craft Grower, Processor, Infuser, and Transporter on Lots 11 and 12 in the Proposed Airway Industrial Park, 1100 Borden Lane, Woodstock, Illinois.*

A roll call vote was taken on items A through D-7

Ayes: D. Flynn, L. Lohmeyer, W. Piersall, J. Prindiville, G. Tebo, M. Turner, and Mayor B. Sager.
Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: none. Motion carried.

V. DISCUSSION

1. Lighting of the Square, November 27, 2020

Noting this event is traditionally held on the Friday after Thanksgiving, Mayor Sager stated this year it would be scheduled for November 27th. He stated due to the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, there are many questions and much to discuss regarding this event, drawing Council's attention to the detailed report submitted by Staff.

Mayor Sager stated the first question is whether Council believes the City should have an in-person Lighting event as has been held in the past. If the answer is no, because Council believes the residents' health, safety, and welfare should be guarded, the City may wish to look at other options, which leads to further questions such as whether there are certain types of things that should take place in some form and be preserved. He noted the Lighting could be live streamed with the use of a drone and cameras placed around the Square. He asked about ways to accomplish visits with

Santa in Santa's Hut, and talked about a virtual Gingerbread Walk and virtual Christmas Tree Walk. He stated the purpose of this discussion is so Staff may begin preparations.

Mayor Sager opined it would be next to impossible to have this as an in-person event at the magnitude it has had in the past and maintain social distancing.

Councilman Tebo stated he would like to have as much of the traditional event as possible. Opining things are changing rapidly regarding COVID-19, he asked if there is a timeframe in which the City must make a decision.

Mayor Sager stated it is important to remember there are more than just City Staff engaged in these preparations, citing Real Woodstock, the Chamber of Commerce, the business owners, and other organizations as examples. He opined a decision must be made at the latest by mid-October.

Councilman Tebo opined people could be scheduled for the Christmas Tree Walk with a limited number of people allowed at one time. He noted it may be possible to allow larger groups closer to the event.

Councilwoman Lohmeyer stated it pains her to say at this time she does not believe it should be an in-person event. She stated she would like to hold off making a decision for as long as possible.

Councilwoman Piersall opined it would be dangerous to hold a traditional lighting as it has been done in the past. She suggested exploring the feasibility of holding a (free) ticketed Lighting, perhaps at six times over the course of two nights. She opined this may control how many people are in the Square at any one time.

Councilman Turner opined it is too early to make a decision, as no one knows the direction things will be going. He stated if there is a way the Lighting can be done, he would like to see this, opining Councilwoman Piersall's suggestion has merit. He asked how thousands of people can be allowed to protest, but not then allow people to make their choice to attend this event. He opined people are slowly giving away their opportunities to make decisions on their own.

Councilman Turner stated private businesses and Staff have to be able to adjust and make decisions on the fly and at the last minute. He opined a way should be found to do this event and let people have a choice and mitigate by putting things in place. Stating he would like to make things work, opining a decision cannot be made until mid-October.

Councilman Flynn noted this has become a big event over the last couple of years, opining now there should be a Plan A, Plan B, and a hybrid plan and see where things stand in mid-October, stating if the pandemic changes course, the event must change with it. He expressed support of a

ticketed, live event with ticketed access to the Square and the numbers limited and controlled. He stated businesses should control access to their space as it is a big night on the Square. He opined it should be a live event with masks required.

Councilman Prindiville stated today science and health professionals would say it is not a good idea to hold such an event. He opined it is unreal to think the City can do a traditional event. Stating it would be ok to turn the lights on and let people come to enjoy them on their own, he stated the event is important to the businesses as well, which should be a consideration. He stated he would be supportive of a live event crafted to be done safely and in line with the criteria of the state and health professionals.

Noting there are several activities to the Lighting, Mayor Sager asked which activities or events Council would consider absolutely essential.

Councilman Prindiville stated Santa's Hut and the Christmas Tree Walk are long-standing traditions. He noted others are important to the groups that organize them.

Councilman Flynn stated the Christmas Tree and Gingerbread Walks are also important, opining access is important, i.e., how many people to let in and how long they are allowed to stay. He suggested having them enter in one door and exit through another, and to ensure there is enough manpower to control this. He opined the Santa Hut is also important, suggesting looking at the salon industry and the criteria it has put in place in terms of masks and eye coverings. He stated the organizers must adapt, opining safety must be the utmost concern.

Councilwoman Lohmeyer opined all of the smaller events would be feasible to do in shifts with control of traffic.

Mayor Sager noted other events which must be considered are the Parade, Cookies with Santa, and the carriage rides.

Councilman Turner opined all of the events have importance to the people who enjoy them. He agreed the City and the organizers must adapt. He advocated for planning to hold the events considering the current limitations, opining the Santa Hut will be difficult. He charged the organizers to look at alternatives over the next few months looking at limiting the number of people, masks, etc. He suggested some of the events be held throughout the holiday season and some that night. Noting people want to see this, he opined ways should be found to make it work. He stated there is enough time for Staff and the organizers to work on this and come back with a plan in mid-October.

Councilman Tebo stated the only thing that really cannot be controlled is the Lighting itself, opining the other events have less volume. He advocated for going ahead to see if plans can be made for everything else and then explore Councilwoman Piersall's suggestions for the Lighting.

Councilwoman Piersall opined the City and organizers must also be mindful of those who do not wish to participate in person. She suggested also having zoom visits with Santa, letter writing to and from Santa, and visiting with Santa through a window as examples. She opined Santa's Hut is one of the most important things to preserve and will be the hardest.

Mr. Stelford noted the City maintains and stores Santa's Hut and the Rotary is responsible for many other aspects, he discussed the possibility of putting in a window for Santa to interact with the children.

Chris Cantwell, Santa's special helper, stated he is very sensitive to the intimate relationship between Santa and the children, opining it cannot happen in that way this year. He also discussed providing a window in the Hut which would help ensure social distancing and still have an element of magic.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager about holding this interaction in another facility rather than the Hut, Mr. Cantwell stated increasing the size of the venue would be problematic from a staffing perspective. He further noted part of what makes this experience unique is it is a private individual family conversation with Santa.

Mayor Sager thanked Mr. Cantwell for his commitment to helping Santa bring something good, positive, and family-oriented to the children and families in Woodstock. He stated he hears Mr. Cantwell saying the individual relationship with Santa via the Santa Hut, even if it is through a window, is still desirable and should be strongly thought about. Mr. Cantwell agreed, opining alterations could be made to the Hut to make this possible. Councilwoman Piersall opined free tickets could be issued for Santa's Hut as well so the lines are not so long.

Mayor Sager stated the direction to Staff seems to be to find ways to be creative to preserve the live Lighting of the Square and its associated events as much as possible, including the possibility of smaller groups and issuance of tickets, while preserving the health and safety of those participating. He stated this is the direction to Staff unless things become more challenging or something becomes impossible or not feasible. He stated Staff will come back to Council with a report closer to mid-October.

Without objection, it was the consensus of the City Council that Staff will proceed along these lines, including contacting the various organizations the City partners with to gauge their feelings.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Councilman Flynn requested that the Ethereal Confections Street Closure item tentatively scheduled for discussion on September 1st be expanded to include all measures taken by the City to help businesses. Without objection, it was the consensus of the City Council that this discussion be expanded.

VI. ADJOURN

Motion by G. Tebo, second by J. Prindiville, to adjourn this regular meeting of the Woodstock City Council to the next regular meeting to be held at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ayes: D. Flynn, L. Lohmeyer, W. Piersall, J. Prindiville, G. Tebo, M. Turner, and Mayor B. Sager.

Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: none. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Smiley
City Clerk